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1 --1. (Twice amended) A computerized customer acquisition method comprising the
 2 steps of:
 3 selecting a customer account record from an electronic customer account
 4 database of a first entity, said customer account record including a customer identifier;
 5 determining if an individual indicated by said customer identifier is a customer
 6 of a second entity; [and]
 7 sending a billing statement from the first entity to said individual;
 8 providing with the billing statement an [acquisition] offer to said individual to pay
 9 at least a portion of an amount due on said billing statement if said individual becomes
 10 a customer of said second entity;
 11 receiving acceptance of said offer from said individual; and
 12 acquiring the individual as a customer by transferring said at least a portion of
 13 said amount to the first entity by the second entity.--

Claim 2, line 2, delete "acquisition".

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1 --9. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said billing statement is a billing
 2 statement of said first entity and said [acquisition] offer is provided to said individual in
 3 [a] said billing statement of said first entity.--

Claim 10, line 2, delete "acquisition".

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1 --11. (Amended) A customer acquisition system comprising:
 2 a memory for storing a customer account record of a first entity, said customer
 3 account record including a customer identifier;
 4 a processor operatively coupled to said memory, said processor configured to:
 5 select a customer account record;

6 determine if an individual indicated by said customer identifier is a customer of
 7 a second entity; [and]
 8 generate a billing statement from the first entity for said individual; and
 9 provide with the billing statement an [acquisition] offer to said individual to pay
 10 at least a portion of an account due on said billing statement if said individual
 11 becomes a customer of said second entity;
 12 means for receiving acceptance of said offer from said individual; and
 13 means for acquiring the individual as a customer by transferring said at least a
 14 portion of said amount to the first entity by the second entity.--

1 --12. (Twice amended) A computerized customer acquisition system comprising:
 2 means for selecting a customer account record from an electronic customer
 3 account database of a first entity, said customer account record including a customer
 4 identifier;
 5 means for determining if an individual indicated by said customer identifier is a
 6 customer of a second entity; [and]
 7 means for sending a billing statement from the first entity to said individual;
 8 means for providing with the billing statement an [acquisition] offer to said
 9 individual to pay at least a portion of an amount due on said billing statement if said
 10 individual becomes a customer of said second entity;
 11 means for receiving acceptance of said offer from said individual; and
 12 means for acquiring the individual as a customer by transferring said at least a
 13 portion of said amount to the first entity by the second entity.--

1 --13. (Amended) An article of manufacture comprising:
 2 a computer readable medium having computer readable code means
 3 embodied thereon, said computer readable program code means comprising:

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cont

4 a step to select a customer account record of a first entity, said customer
5 account record including a customer identifier;
6 a step to determine if an individual indicated by said customer identifier is a
7 customer of a second entity; [and]
8 a step to generate a billing statement from the first entity for said individual; and
9 a step to provide with the billing statement an [acquisition] offer to said
10 individual to pay at least a portion of an amount due on said billing statement if said
11 individual becomes a customer of said second entity.--

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1 --14. (Twice Amended) A computerized customer acquisition method comprising the
2 steps of:
3 establishing in an electronic database predefined conditions for offering to pay
4 an amount to an individual provided said individual becomes a customer of a first
5 entity; [and]
6 providing said predefined conditions to a second entity to determine whether
7 said second entity should provide to said individual an [acquisition] offer to pay at least
8 a portion of an amount due on a billing statement for said individual;
9 receiving acceptance of said offer from said individual; and
10 acquiring the customer by transferring the offer amount to the second entity by
11 the first entity.--

Claim 17, line 2, change "service provider" to --first entity--.

Claim 18, line 1, delete "acquisition".

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1 --19. (Twice Amended) A customer/acquisition system comprising:
2 a memory for storing customer account records;
3 a processor operatively coupled to said memory, said processor configured to:

4 establish predefined conditions for offering to pay an amount to an individual
 5 provided said individual becomes a customer of a first entity; and
 6 communicate said predefined conditions to a second entity to determine
 7 whether said second entity should provide to said individual an [acquisition] offer to
 8 pay at least a portion of an amount due on a billing statement for said individual;
 9 means for receiving acceptance of said offer from said individual; and
 10 means for acquiring the customer by transferring the offer amount to the
 11 second entity by the first entity.--

1 --20. (Twice Amended) A computerized customer acquisition system comprising:
 2 means for establishing in an electronic database predefined conditions for
 3 offering to pay an amount to an individual provided said individual becomes a
 4 customer of a first entity; [and]
 5 means for communicating said predefined conditions to a second entity to
 6 determine whether said second entity should provide to said individual an [acquisition]
 7 offer to pay at least a portion of an amount due on a billing statement for said
 8 individual;
 9 means for receiving acceptance of said offer from said individual; and
 10 means for acquiring the customer by transferring the offer amount to the
 11 second entity by the first entity.--

1 --22. (Twice Amended) A method for paying an amount due indicated on a billing
 2 statement generated from an electronic database, comprising the steps of:
 3 receiving an [acquisition] offer with the billing statement to have at least a
 4 portion of said amount due paid by a third party in exchange for becoming a customer
 5 of said third party;
 6 indicating acceptance of said [acquisition] offer for said third party to pay at
 7 least a portion of said amount due; and